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AUTHOR Lieblong, Burl W.; McLendon, Don
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ABSTRACT

A project was designed to identify student needs contributing to high vocational technical school dropout rates and to develop strategies for effective rate reduction. Project staff objectives were to (1) identify problems impeding potential dropouts from training success, (2) alleviate potential dropouts' critical needs, (3) implement meaningful training experiences in identifying, solving, and referring critical needs, and (4) reduce overall dropout rate by 40%. All objectives were realized to some extent; however, the dropout rate was reduced by only 35%. At three vocational technical schools arrangements were made for students to be seen on campus by professional counselors. During the project's first two years, approximately 207 self-, instructor-, or administrator-referred students were seen in confidential consultations. Program responses by instructors and students were considered positive. The instructional staff received a six-week training program to assist them in recognizing educational/emotional problems. Through the counseling staff's preenrollment form, a number of educational (e.g., poor educational background) and personal (e.g., financial problems) needs were identified as impeding students' occupational training success. Counseling and instructional staff members initiated an overall learning assessment and specific training program. Surveys were used to determine student awareness of counseling services, staff effectiveness, student consumer views, and instructor awareness of counseling services. (CSS)

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# Utilizing Professional Counseling Services To Reduce the Dropout Rate in Postsecondary Vocational Technical Education

FINAL REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Prepared by

Burl W. Lieblong, Project Director
Crowley's Ridge Vocational Technical School
Interstate 40 at Newcastle Road
Forrest City, Arkansas 72335

and

Don McLendon, MSW; ACSW
Clinical Associates
Wynne, Arkansas

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## Statement of Problem

There are 23 postsecondary vocational technical schools geographically located over the State to serve the occupational training needs of Arkansas youth and adults. These schools have contributed much to meeting the vocational and technical training needs throughout the State. However, student retention had become a concern in some areas of Arkansas. One such instance was Crowley's Ridge Vocational Technical School at Forrest City, Arkansas. Forrest City is located in Eastern Arkansas near Memphis, Tennessee. The population in this area included a high percentage of individuals who were socio-economically deprived and many of the students enrolled in vocational training had great difficulty adjusting and/or progressing in their training. As a result, many of these individuals were exiting from school prior to gaining any marketable skills. Too often these students did not formally withdraw from class, therefore; the school staff had very little opportunity to counsel with them before they dropped out. The school was experiencing a drop-out rate of 18 to 25 percent each year.

Many of the students who dropped out had educational and/or emotional problems that contributed to leaving school without learning a skill or completing a vocational course of study. Some of these individuals were referred to the school by other agencies or programs such as the Rehabilitation Service. The Rehabilitation Service was the only program or agency which referred students to the school and provided information about the students' emotional stability or educational abilities. Thus, without proper counseling to help solve these problems some students became drop-outs.

Also, some of the high drop-out rate could be attributed to student-staff problems. Most of the instructional staff did not possess sufficient competencies to deal with student problems of a psychological nature and/or learning disabilities.

The school realized that extensive efforts must be made to identify potential early school leavers who were encountering problems in training. A feasibility study had been conducted in regards to contracting professional counseling services to help alleviate the drop-out problem. This study indicated that counseling services should be offered no less than one day per week so that remediation techniques could be utilized often enough to alleviate the individual's problem.

A survey of seven additional vocational technical schools indicated that similar problems existed. Crowley's Ridge Vocational Technical School proposed to contract with Clinical Associates in Wynne, Arkansas, to provide professional counseling services to reduce the drop-out rate, improve staff competency in student problem identification and develop pre-enrollment evaluation procedures for three schools.

## Purposes and Goals

The overall purpose of this project was to enable potential drop-out students to achieve satisfaction and progress at an acceptable level of performance in a training program. More specifically the goals of the program were:

(1) To develop a pre-enrollment assessment module.

(2) To improve staff competency to identify and deal with student problems.

(3) To reduce the overall drop-out rate of students in the project schools 40 percent by the end of the project.

## Results or Benefits Expected

It was anticipated that the proposed activities would result in an effective approach to developing the educational, occupational and personal potential of students pursuing postsecondary training. Moreover, it was anticipated that this project would reflect considerable transportability for other schools in the state experiencing a high rate of early school leavers. The specific results and benefits to be derived from this research and development project included:

(1) A systematic design for identifying student needs that impede or prevent students from succeeding in training and a reservior of common needs associated with potential early school leavers.

(2) A workable plan to enhance the students ability to progress through an occupational program.

(3) A staff with increased competencies in the identification, solution and referral of student needs.

(4) A closer linkage between student and staff with a minimal drop-out rate.

## Performance Objectives

The performance objectives for the proposed project activities were as follows:

### Objective Number 1

The project staff will demonstrate ability to identify a common core of problems which impede or prevent potential drop-out students from succeeding in vocational-technical training. It is expected that (a) strategies will be developed for pre-enrollment and continued assessment which are acceptable to 80 percent of the school staff (b) 100 percent of the students will be involved in the identification process during the second year of the project, and (c) a document of problems both common and unique with a broad appliability will be compiled.

## Objective Number 2

The project staff will demonstrate ability to alleviate critical needs of potential early school leavers. It is expected that (1) 60 percent of the students served will show considerable improvement in their training program as evidenced by the instructors and (2) 80 percent of the students assisted will respond favorably to the services provided.

## Objective Number 3

The project staff will demonstrate ability to coordinate and implement meaningful training experiences in identifying, solving, and referring critical needs of potential problem students. It is expected that (a) an interview module will be developed for use in the training session, (b) 85 percent of the staff will participate in all training sessions, (c) 80 percent of the participants will respond favorably to the training and (d) 70 percent of the staff will show increased knowledge regarding the identification and solution of student needs as evidenced by an instrument.

## Objective Number 4

The project staff will demonstrate ability to reduce the drop-out rate of students as compared to previous years. It is expected that the improved student services will reduce the overall drop-out rate at least 40 percent in the project schools by July, 1978 as compared to the three previous years.

## Procedures

This project was designed to identify student needs which contribute to the high drop-out rate and develop strategies for effectively reducing the number of early school leavers. Crowley's Ridge Vocational Technical School was experiencing an unusually high drop-out rate with students before they had obtained any marketable skills.

The school had no counseling staff and the administration had undertaken a feasibility study with a few nursing students prior to initiating this research and development project. As a result of the initial endeavor with the nursing students, the goals and objectives set forth in this project were primarily counseling oriented. The project was administered through Crowley's Ridge Vocational Technical School; however, two other state vocational technical schools were experiencing similar problems with early school leavers and expressed a desire to participate in the research and development activities. These schools were Delta Vocational Technical School at Marked Tree, Arkansas, and Foothills Vocational Technical School at Searcy, Arkansas.

The project activities focused on identifying potential student problems and developing a method of dealing with these student problems through professional counseling services. The project director obtained professional counseling services through a consultant firm. Clinical Associates, Wynne, Arkansas, entered into a contractual agreement to develop a systematic plan which would enhance the achievement of potential drop-outs and result in a significant reduction of early school leavers.

At the beginning of the school year, August 1976, meetings were held with the instructors of each of three vocational technical schools to acquaint them with the professional counseling services. Arrangements were made to provide direct professional counseling services on campus one day per week at each of the three schools. Meetings were conducted with all classes where the services were briefly announced and notices were posted on bulletin boards explaining the services and time schedule.

Student referrals were primarily of three types: (1) students voluntarily requested assistance, (2) students referred by instructors, and

(3) students referred by administration. Individual case records were maintained on each student utilizing the services. All parts of the professional counseling services delivered directly to the students were held in the strictest confidence and records were maintained strictly by Clinical Associates. Any information related to personal problems of the students was not shared with the school staff unless a signed release was provided by the student.

The normal length of school day at these schools for students was six hours; however, the consultant staff spent a minimum of seven hours at each school on the designated day each week. One reason for this time schedule was to allow at least one hour after classes for staff development activities. One of the important aspects of this research and development activity was improving staff competence in recognizing student needs, resolving the needs and/or referring them for appropriate assistance.

Endorsement of the counseling services varied from school to school and instructor to instructor; however, response to the program from both instructors and students was considered to be positive. The students who requested the services seemed to have little difficulty dealing with any stigma associated with professional services. Based on ten years experience, the consultant staff was surprised at the overall healthy attitude of the students in accepting the services and not being self conscious.

In addition to the direct counseling services, a program to provide staff training to recognize educational and emotional problems was set up. However, the response to this service demanded the need for a course outline. Staff response overall was very positive and their request for a detailed outline had not been anticipated. The training program was utilized as an educational tool and also served as an opportunity for the counseling staff to become acquainted with the instructional staff at each site.

Since student requests had increased more than anticipated and the demand for a detailed course outline took considerable time, a decision was made to terminate the training program after six weeks. After this six week period, some time was used to concentrate on developing a detailed course outline and implementing a more sophisticated program for the second year of the project.

During the first year, 107 students received counseling services. The number of contacts per student varied greatly, but there was a total of 742 counseling sessions provided these students. This computes out to an average of almost seven counseling contacts per student. The average time spent per student contact was approximately 40 minutes. Ninety percent of these students either indicated they were considering dropping out or were considered as potential drop-out students by the school staff. During the first year approximately 20 percent of the total average daily attendance was seen by the professional counseling services. For those students who did not avail themselves of the services or became early leavers even with the aid of these services, intensive efforts were made by the counseling services to identify student reasons for exiting prior to acquiring a marketable skill.

Several instruments were developed during the first year. Among these were forms for determining student/staff awareness of the program services and for providing information which would assist in the development of a pre-assessment form. One of the goals of the project was to develop a pre-enrollment assessment module to be used for predicting students' ability to successfully complete a program in vocational education and/or identify problem areas where help might be given. The pre-enrollment form (Appendix 2.) was developed after approximately eight months of research in the three schools.

The research that led to the items chosen for the questionnaire was based on three sources of information: (1) monitoring drop-out information and reasons given on the school's drop form, (2) experience with students who sought professional counseling (comparing their initial complaints and following up on the effects of counseling) and (3) deriving information from instructors' experiences and opinions regarding causes of poor performance and drop-out.

In this manner, the personal and educational problems were chosen for the initial form. One further step concerned with testing the face validity of the form was built into the CA-2. (See appendix 2.) In addition to responding to the items chosen for the form, an opinion ranking concerning the personal and educational problems was included in the instructions. The students' ranking were compared with instructors' ranking of the same problems. Both of these were compared with the compilation of reasons given for dropping, i.e., the "common" and the "unique" problems. The determinations were used to develop the weighting given to the rating scores.

The results of the research form CA-2 were broken down into several areas. First, the CA-2 scores were plotted against current performance (grades). (See Chart #1.) It was found that scores on the CA-2 had a relationship with current grades. (See Chart #2.) In general, as scores on the CA-2 increased, the corresponding grade decreased. As can be seen from Chart #2, the range of scores associated with each letter grade is wide. Yet even in the wide range, the average scores showed a consistent trend as mentioned, especially at grades of C and lower. This trend was not found in comparing the CA-2 with high school grades and composite of teacher evaluations and GATB "G" scores.

Chart #3 shows a compilation of the results from all three schools concerning CA-2 scores (x) and grades (y). Each of the quadrants show the percentage of scores that fall above or below the means of each variable. The "positive" quadrant shows that 23 percent of the scores fell into the category of person who scored high on the CA-2 (having many problems) and have low grades. It is interesting to note that this "predicted" percentage is nearly identical to the current drop-out rate among the three schools and identical to the percent of students who indicated on a questionnaire that they were having difficulties in school. The false negative category identifies those students who do not indicate problems on the CA-2 (low scores) and yet have low grades. When this 15 percent is added to the 23 percent in the positive category, the resulting 38 percent closely approximates the drop-out rate based on average daily attendance among the three schools. The 41 percent in the "negative" category includes students with low CA-2 scores and high grades. The 21 percent in the false positive category includes students who indicated that they have a lot of problems yet have high grades.

In exploring the reasons for the occurrence of the false positive and negative categories, age turned out to be a significant variable. In age groups above 30, it was found that this group averaged about 20 points more on educational problems (page 3 CA-2) than younger age groups while maintaining adequate performance. The younger age groups showed more variability, with a tendency to deny or overlook problems. These two age groups could explain the false positive and false negative categories respectively.

CHART #1

| | Average points | Average grade point |
|---|---|---|
| Foothills | 54.25 | 2.9 |
| Crowley's Ridge | 57.75 | 2.4 |
| Delta | 57.40 | 2.75 |
| Total | 56.35 | 2.68 |

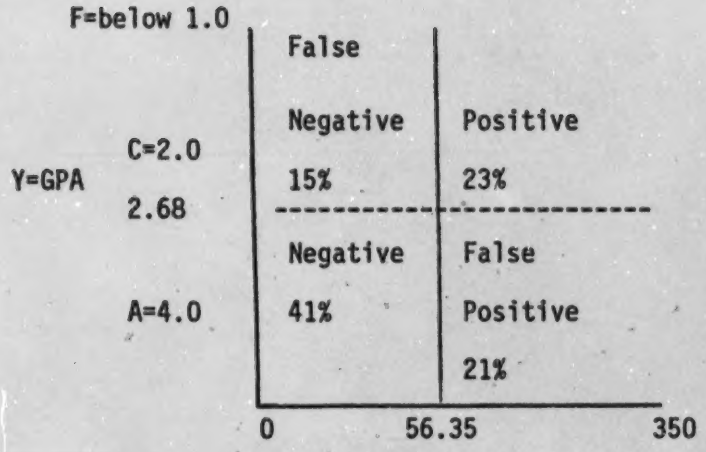
Average points and GPA Compared Across Schools

CHART #2

| | Range | Average points |
|---|---|---|
| F | 22-82 | 87.95 |
| D | 1-91 | 84.53 |
| C | 0-117 | 53.9 |
| B | 0-81 | 39-73 |
| A | 0-99 | 33.25 |

CA-2 Points and Range of Points
compared with Grades

CHART #3




How the CA-2 Predicted Current Grades from CA-2 Score.

Combining the findings thus far, we can feel fairly sure that the student, by becoming familiar with the information to be presented in the CA-2, will have an opportunity to consider some objective evidence on problems prior to enrollment. Thus, by determining scores on an assessment form, the school counselor has a tool for interviewing that will roughly predict the likelihood of poor performance or dropping out. The counselor will know that the student has had exposure to the consideration of problems and thus has a chance to seek help early while the chances are better for successfully coping with the problem. Also, the counselor will have a detailed knowledge of what kind of problem the student may have during the year and thus will be able to anticipate what kind of intervention is likely to be needed.

In essence, to augment findings of previous researchers in the field, the consultants concur that there is no personality type of problem type that can be singled out to predict poor performance and drop-outs. We feel that one must initially consider an array of experiential difficulties and then assist the person in considering what will affect the individual as the school year progresses. Thus, the emphasis is on prevention and a problematic approach as the initial phase of intervention. Considering that most vocational technical schools have one staff member assigned to students services with at least 200 students, a device that signals the likelihood of poor performance or early leaving, and that takes very little time, should be of value. As the CA-2 is used in its intended setting, it will become known how well the CA-2 predicts actual drop-outs and poor performance and how well it enhances the counseling process.

The following is a list of identifiable common and unique problems. The project staff defined unique problems as those primarily requiring

professional assistance with assessment and intervention and common problems as those that staff or instructors could handle.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WHICH IMPEDE OR PREVENT STUDENTS FROM SUCCEEDING IN OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

| Unique | Common |
|---|---|
| Low Reading Skills | Poor Educational Background; High School Dropout |
| Difficulty with Concentration | Bothered by or Easily Distracted by Loud Noise or Sudden Noise |
| Difficulty Understanding Verbal Instructions | Cannot Tolerate a Closed Space |
| Difficulty with Memory | Lack of Attention to Small Details |
| Poor Study Skills | Lack of Praise or Support from Family or School Staff |
| | Lack of Study Time |
| | Poor Coordination |
| | Lack of Neatness in Work |

PERSONAL NEEDS WHICH IMPEDE OR PREVENT STUDENTS FROM SUCCEEDING IN OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

| Unique | Common |
|---|---|
| Marital Problems or Problems with a Boyfriend or Girlfriend | Financial Problems |
| Personal-Emotional Problems Such as Depression or Nerves | Parents or Marriage Partner Disapproved of Your Going to School |
| History of Alcohol or Drug Abuse | Transportation Problems |
| Problems Between Students and Teachers or Staff | Living Conditions |
| Medical or Health Problems | Problems Between Students and Teachers or Staff |
| Family Problems Such as Deaths, Frequent Arguments | |

The pre-enrollment assessment form was used in the schools beginning with the enrollment of students in July and August of 1977. However, some difficulty was encountered due to the fact that the staff was not able to completely utilize the pre-enrollment assessment form with all students who enrolled. This was primarily due to a lack of manpower and a tremendous influx of students from time to time requiring immediate placement. Therefore, complete procedures were not built into the system for testing the pre-enrollment assessment form as a complete interview instrument. However, in cases where it was used, there were some very effective results and it was the opinion of the consultants that the pre-enrollment assessment form could be used very effectively as a part of the enrollment procedures. The pre-enrollment assessment findings at the completion of the project are very positive indicators for use of the instrument.

The professional counseling services continued the second year in all three schools. There were several interruptions during the second year primarily due to severe weather which caused the closing of schools for a period of time and later on, an additional amount of time spent in class by students to make up for lost time. As a result of this, several of the direct service modules which were set aside for students were utilized for research services only. Also, there was a transition in terms of some of the staff of Clinical Associates with the termination of services of one professional counselor and the induction of a new professional counseling associate in February, 1978. Despite this transition, there was no interruption in services delivered directly to the students and the supportive services delivered to the staff in the three schools.

Prior to reporting the direct services that were delivered, it should be pointed out that the instructional staff in the three schools overwhelmingly supported direct professional counseling services, with some 76 percent of the staff supporting the services. As previously stated in the first year activities, all services of a professional counseling nature were voluntary and confidential. At the beginning of the year in July and again during each quarter of the second year, these services were announced to the students through their regular classroom sessions. The staff of Clinical Associates went to the various classrooms announcing that professional counseling services were available to students on a voluntary basis and through referrals by instructors or the administrative personnel. At various times during the second year of the project, several people who enrolled or who applied for enrollment at the respective schools were provided assistance prior to their acceptance into school and recommendations were made as to their matriculation through the school process.

It is important to note that the services were not necessarily limited to direct counseling services alone. In addition, multiple ancillary services not only were delivered, but also were made available on a demand basis. These services were utilized by the staff and administration of the three schools, as well as by students. A quick review of these services included psychological testing for personality, intelligence tests, interest tests, and ability tests. Also included were referrals to other agencies, such as public housing authority, family physicians, as well as several instances involving critical cases of direct referrals for in-patient hospitalization. These services were primarily based upon the experience and training of the professional counseling services staff.

On several occasions, it was necessary for the professional counseling services staff to become involved directly in disciplinary proceedings involving several of the students. These proceedings were all held in the strictest confidence, and any participation and information given by the clinical counseling staff was provided only after the results of a strict release of information which was developed in the contract. At no time during the direct professional counseling were services interrupted by the refusal of the student participating in the project to give information to the instructional or administrative staff. This not only enhanced the trustworthiness of the student relationship to the professional counseling staff but also enhanced the freedom of the staff to work with the students more closely. This also improved the validity of the information shared with the instructional and administrative staff.

Another area of services which was not originally anticipated in the contract but developed as very beneficial to both staff and students was the provision for a complete educational assessment for individual students who were having specific and general learning problems. As the project developed, it became apparent that there were a number of students in the GED programs and the regular training programs who suffered from specific and general learning disabilities. As the professional counseling service staff became more acquainted with the staff and students of the respective schools, requests for more specific assistance in developing programs of a learning nature were submitted to work with these individual students. It cannot be over emphasized that, although this number of students may have been significantly low at the beginning, but as the two-year project continued, the demand for these particular services increased greatly.

The effectiveness of this service also became more apparent toward the end of the year. A closely coordinated effort between the members of the professional counseling services and the instructional staff of programs which required specific learning techniques, developed into a very cooperative arrangement. This included the overall learning assessment and specific training program developed ideally to suit the individual student. There were numerous instances where the staff of the professional counseling services, the instructor, and the student worked very closely together developing a specific learning exercise for the student. It was a very rewarding part of the exercise to be able to develop a program which contributed significantly to the enhancement and performance of those individual students, as well as the reward of the instructors and professional counseling members in seeing these students improve their level of functioning to the point that they could matriculate successfully through school and be employed in a career.

As previously stated, the second year of the project was vexed with several problems, primarily the intensive bad weather during the winter of 1977-78 and the cancellation of school on numerous days. There was a slight reduction in the number of direct services delivered due to an intense demand for the completion of the research material which was necessary in order to develop a comprehensive statistical background for the pre-enrollment assessment form. However, despite these handicaps, direct services continued to be a very high and successful part of the program's delivery. Approximately 100 students were provided services the second year of the project. Some 665 requests for services were made and 458 contacts with these students were made during the second year.

During the two years some 1200 student contacts were made from a total of 1488 requests. The two-year contract of 241 days based on a seven hour day, resulted in 1687 hours contracted for services. Overall, some 54 percent of the staff contract time was spent in direct service delivery. Regarding the overall enrollment rate, Clinical Associates provided services for approximately 19 percent of the students enrolled in the respective schools; whereas in the first year of the project, some 16 percent of the total enrollment received services. It is interesting to note that the students who received services continued to average above the request for normal mental health services in the general population. According to an initial study of the mental health task force headed by President Carter's wife, Rosalynn Carter, 15 percent of the general population is always in need of mental health services. This survey reflects that eight to ten percent of the general population seek mental health services in a given time. It is interesting to note that the population of the vocational technical schools in this project represents not only an average in terms of the number of students in need of services, but also an overwhelming increase in the average number of students who seek the services.

## Evaluation

In evaluating this project, consideration was given to such factors as: (a) discrepancies between present program/staff/student performance and the proposed program goals, (b) responses of students and staff, (c) careful analyses of data collected and (d) the transportability of the tested strategies.

The evaluation of this project involved the performance criteria stated in each of the behavioral objectives. The basic evaluation design is presented in a matrix chart which follows the evaluation narrative. The performance objectives will not be stated in this section since they are included in the summary matrix charts.

Objective # 1. The anticipated achievement for objective 1 (b) and (c) was satisfactorily accomplished. On objective 1 (a), it was expected that strategies would be developed for pre-enrollment and continued assessment which were acceptable to 80 percent of the school staff although the criteria was not achieved, 76 percent of the staff indicated that the strategies of assessment developed in this project were acceptable. Since there was only a four percent discrepency from the anticipated achievement, it would appear that staff was effective in carrying out objective 1.

Objective # 2. The project staff demonstrated ability to alleviate critical needs of potential early school leavers. On objective 2 (b), it was expected that 60 percent of students served would show considerable improvement in the training program as evidenced by the instructors. The results revealed that critical needs of potential drop outs were being met with 60 percent of these students showing improvement in their training program.

The anticipated achievement for objective 2 (d) was that 80 percent of the students assisted would respond favorable to the services provided. Actually 84 percent respond favorably to the services provided. Objective 2 (a) and (b) were achieved at the acceptable criteria level stated in the proposal.

Objective # 3. The project staff demonstrated ability to coordinate and implement meaningful training experiences in identifying, solving, and referring critical needs of potential early school leavers. The level of accomplishment for objectives 3 (a), (b), and (d) met or exceeded the acceptable criteria. It was expected that (a) an interview module would be developed for use in the training session (b) 85 percent of the staff would participate in all training sessions and (d) 70 percent of the staff would show increased knowledge regarding the identification and solution of student needs. An interview module was developed and 100 percent of the staff participated in the training session. Seventy six percent of the staff showed increased knowledge regarding the identification and solution of student needs as evidenced by an instrument. It was expected that 80 percent of the participants would respond favorably to the training; however, the achievement level was slightly less than anticipated. Seventy six percent of the participants responded favorably to the training.

Objective # 4. A major objective in this project was to reduce the drop out rate of students as compared to previous years. It was expected that the improved services would reduced the overall drop-out rate at least 40 percent in the project schools by July, 1978 as compared to the three previous years. The improved services resulted in a 35 percent reduction of the overall drop-out rate. Although, objective 4 was not fully achieved, the 35 percent reduction indicates a measure of success.

## EVALUATION SUMMARY CHART

| Performance Objective | ANTICIPATED ACHIEVEMENT | | | ACCOMPLISHMENTS | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Activity | Acceptable Criteria | Date to be Completed | Target Group | Level of Accomplishment | Completion |
| 1. The project staff will demonstrate ability to identify a common core of problems which impede or prevent potential drop-out students from succeeding in vocational-technical training. It is expected that (a) strategies will be developed for pre-enrollment and continued assessment which are acceptable to 80 percent of the school staff (b) 100 percent of the students will be involved in the identification process during the second year of the project, and (c) a document of problems both common and unique, with a broad applicability will be compiled. | (a) Strategies for assessment. | 80 percent staff acceptance | June 78 | School Staff | 76% | March 78 |
| | (b) Identification Process | 100 percent of students involved | June 78 | Potential drop out students | 100% | 3-78 |
| | (c) Identify problems that impede or prevent success. | A document of common and unique problems with broad appliability | June 77 | Early School Leavers | 100% | 6-77 |
| 2. The project staff will demonstrate ability to alleviate critical needs of potential early school leavers. It is expected that (1) 60 percent of students served will show considerable improvement in their training program as evidenced by the instructors and (2) 80 percent of the students assisted will respond favorable to the services provided. | (a) Alleviate critical needs of early school leavers | 60 percent of students show improvement | June 78 | Potentially Early School Leavers | 60% | 3-78 |
| | (b) Student Response to activity | 80 percent favorable response | June 78 | Potential Early School Leavers | 84% | 3-78 |

## EVALUATION SUMMARY CHART

| Performance Objective | ANTICIPATED ACHIEVEMENT | | | ACCOMPLISHMENTS | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Activity | Acceptable Criteria | Date to be Completed | Target Group | Level of Accomplishment | Completion |
| 3. The project staff will demonstrate ability to coordinate and implement meaningful training experiences in identifying, solving, and referring critical needs of potential problem students. It is expected that (a) an interview module will be developed for use in the training session, (b) 85 percent of the staff will participate in all training sessions, (c) 80 percent of the participants will respond favorably to the training and (d) 70 percent of the staff will show increased knowledge regarding the identification and solution of student needs as evidenced by an instrument. | (a) Meaningful training experiences | Develop interview module | May 77 | School Staff and 100% of Students | 100% | 5-77 |
| | (b) Training Sessions | 85% staff participation | 12-77 | School Staff | 100% | 5-78 |
| | (c) Staff response to training | 80% favorable response | 12-77 | School Staff | 76% | 5-78 |
| | (d) Increase staff competencies | 70% show increased knowledge | 12-77 | School Staff | 76% | 5-78 |
| 4. The project staff will demonstrate ability to reduce the drop-out rate of students as compared to previous years. It is expected that the improved student services will reduce the overall drop-out rate at least 40 percent in the project schools by July 1978 as compared to the three previous years. | Ability to reduce drop out rate | 40 percent reduction | 6-78 | Early School Leavers | 35% | 3-78 |

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### PRE-ENROLLMENT ASSESSMENT FORM FINDINGS

The Staff of Clinical Associates, in cooperation with the staff of the Department of Education and the Project Director of the school, attempted to develop a methodology for identifying students who may experience potential problems in vocational education. As a result of developing an instrument whereby we would be able to identify these students, it was initially hoped that a measurable instrument could be developed whereby a valid test score could be used from a test format. As the process developed and in reviewing the literature and developing this pre-enrollment assessment form, we came up with a number of pieces of information. One primary piece of information which needs to be included at this time was the identification of common and unique problems both personal and educational of the students. Unique problems were identified as those which primarily require professional assistance with both assessing the problems throughout the intervention treatment and the resolution of the problem. Common problem was defined as those that staff or instructors could handle primarily and may or may not require professional intervention. The personal unique problems continued to persist throughout the second year of the project as identified in the pre-enrollment assessment form. These include marital problems, personal emotional problems, history of alcohol or drug abuse, problems between student, teachers or staff, medical or health problems and family problems, such as death and frequent arguments. The unique educational problems continue to be low reading skills, difficulty with memory and poor study skills. It is important to point out that in contributing to information validating these problems in a review of the clinical records of the students that were worked with, common problems

were very insignificant in that number of students; whereas, the unique problems made up approximately 90 percent of the students chief complaints.

The intentions of Clinical Associates was to provide to the State Department of Education, Vocational Education Division, an instrument which in their opinion, would be a critical items interview format. It was the intention that this pre-enrollment assessment form could be used by the counselors in the schools, with assistance and instructions by the specially trained people of Clinical Associates, to provide a critical items interview list whereby students at the time of admission could be given this to complete and then be followed up by the counselor in support with professionally trained people as indicated. Hopefully, this pre-enrollment assessment form can be further refined as it is put into use.

The pre-enrollment assessment form was used in the three-project schools beginning with the enrollment of students in July and August of 1977. However, some difficulty was encountered due to the fact that we were not able to utilized completely the pre-enrollment assessment form with all students who enrolled. This was primarily due to a lack of manpower and a tremendous influx of students from time to time requiring immediate placement. Therefore, complete procedures were not built into the system to avail the pre-enrollment assessment form being used as a complete interview instrument. However, in cases where it was used, there were some very effective results and it was the opinion of the examiner that the pre-enrollment assessment form could be used very effectively as a part of the enrollment procedures. We will now go into further details on observational findings of the pre-enrollment assessment form in the second year.

Validity for the pre-enrollment assessment form was primarily established utilizing the test and measurement concept of content validity. This involved essentially a systematic examination of the constructed test to determine whether it covered a representative sample of the behavior

domains to be measured. As has been stated elsewhere, the scale in its' entirety was based on items selected and pooled from students, staff and administrators, as well as from previous research and the experience of the staff of Clinical Associates.

For the 1977-1978 school year, the form was given to all students, minus the ranking section of the research edition, which would be considered the third page of this form. This administration was given at the beginning of the school year and was administered in mass after the students had enrolled. Once the enrollment form was scored, student with significantly high scores were contacted and given appointments with the counseling service. After discussing their CA-2 scores, they were given the choice of continuing with the counseling service.

The underlying premise behind offering counseling services to the students with high scores was that by utilizing this procedure and a close follow up, this would increase the success rate and effectiveness of the professional counseling service, thus decrease the dropout figure. One of the previous year's conclusions was that the 60 percent figure of students remaining in school or graduating might have been higher if students had not waited so long before seeking help. Thus it was felt by the professional counseling staff that a critical items interview administered at the time of enrollment would provide a predictive identifier which would provide a means for locating, identifying and providing professional counseling services to those high risk students. It must be recalled that, in the review of the literature, a similar procedure was utilized in reducing vocational school dropout rates by using one to three counseling sessions and the GATB as a pre-screening device. Preliminary figures suggest that the utilization of the pre-enrollment assessment form resulted in a positive conclusion. At present, the success rate

of the counseling service of those students who were seen is approximately 60 percent. It is important to note that these figures are concurrent with the first year.

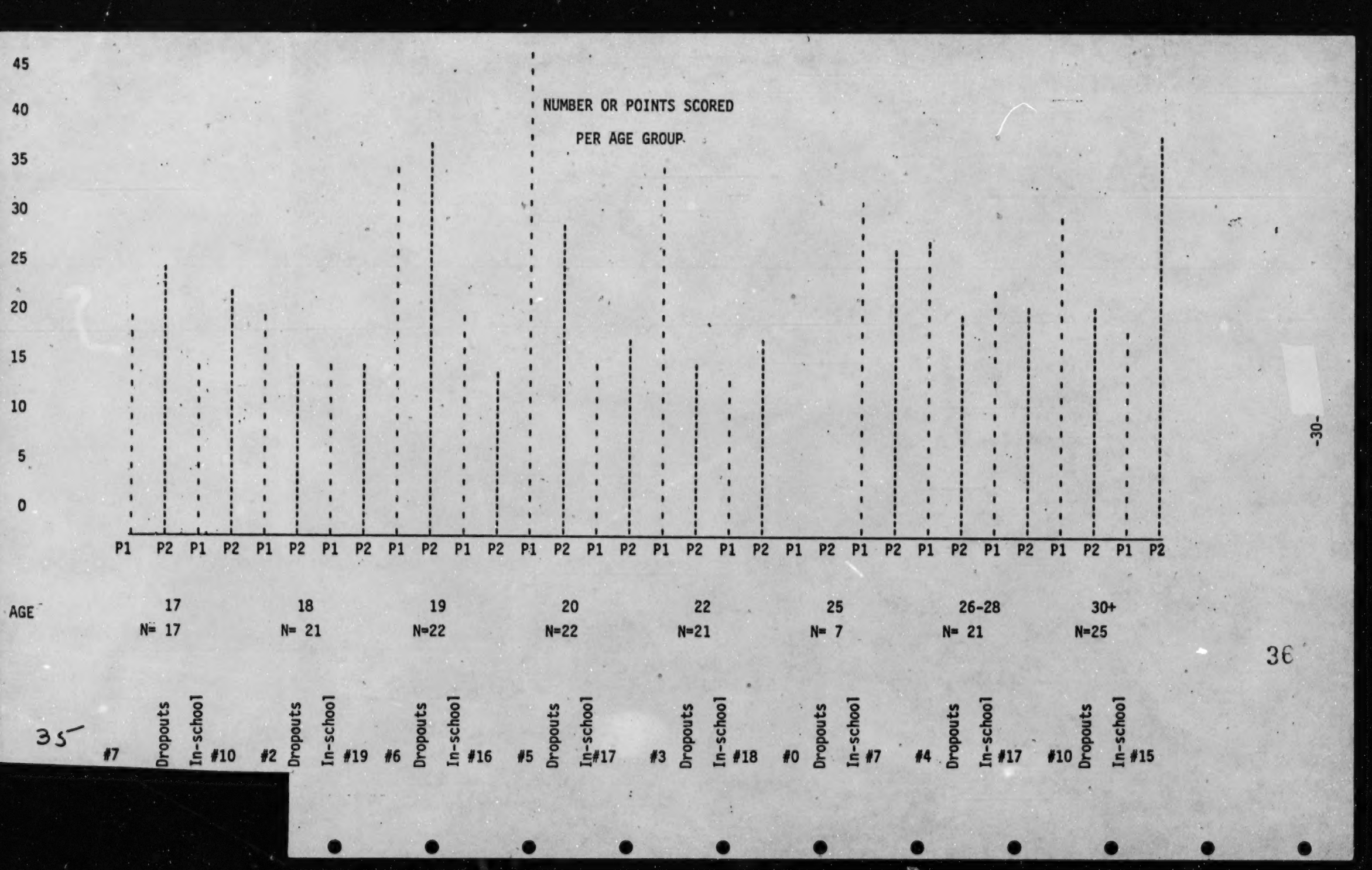
When comparing success rates for the two years, it is important to note that the pre-enrollment assessment form was administered after students had been enrolled in school. Therefore, it was not used as a pre-enrollment device whereby information regarding the students with potential high risk problems could be included in the professional counseling services from their initial start in school. The utilization of the pre-enrollment assessment form turned out to be a follow up again, rather than the original intent, which was to make it the initial criteria in identifying potential high risk students. However, it should be pointed out that the pre-enrollment assessment form was very effectively used and for a number of students, the form provided some very valid grounds for discussing problem areas. It is important to point out that from the experiences of the staff of Clinical Associates it is their feelings that the form is best utilized as a critical interview technique to be used in an individual counseling session with the student at the end of the administration of the form. This procedure would allow the student to discuss problems he or she indicated were serious; therefore, provide clarification with an immediate avenue of intervention. At this point, it allows the counselor to discuss and explain all services available to the student and to assess whether the student has an interest in pursuing the counseling services. It is important to note that students above the age of 30 tend to have higher CA-2 scores, on the average of twenty points. In educational problems, the finding revealed that these older students continued to make good grades. This fact was duplicated both years and is considered important. It is also

recognized that variables, such as age, motivation and the individual's coping skills, interactions with the school environment and future problems would not necessarily be presented on this paper and pencil examination. Therefore, there is a wide variability of the pre-enrollment assessment form; however, it was demonstrated to be of significant use as a critical items interview. It was found that scores of 26 negative points or above on the CA-2 critical items interview was considered to be a cut-off point in predicting success in vocational technical schools. Students going above the 26 negative points had a 90 percent dropout rate and students going below the 26 negative point had a mixed and variable school success rate. Therefore, we can conclude that this critical items format can be used as: (1) a critical items interview list to initiate discussion of problems with the student and counselor; and, (2) may be utilized as a limited predictor of student success in vocational technical school, assuming the student has a high negative score.

Also, the development of the pre-enrollment assessment form at this time has been found to be a significantly useful critical items interview checklist. It was found to be a useful input in identifying unique and common problems and in providing a limited predictive usefulness. At present, it is again stated that the state of development is; as a critical items interview, it is foreseen that futher research and utilization on a much broader sample of students could provide a more defined predictive instrument.

The use of the CA-2 as an indicator of potential student problems based on questions answered on the form at the beginning of the enrollment present some interesting trends. The examiners made a list of students who took the questionnaire and then compiled age, class and grades over

two semesters. It was not possible due to the time frame limitations and staff transition to do a complete analysis of the scores and grades. However, a random sample of 156 students was selected by age category to compare CA-2 results with grades and dropouts. The random sample was dividied into age categories as show in the graph. Each answer by the respondents is placed in two categories, page 1, which related to personal problems and page 2, which relates to educational problems. (See Appendix 1 and 2.) These responses are categorized by drop-out and in-school students identified by age category. As the graph shows, an interesting trend develops at the 19-year-old level where personal problems consistently ranked high in the dropout column. Despite several instances of educational problems ranking high, students tend to stay in school if their personal problem category remains lower, below 26 negative points. This tends to support the staff-student concern for emotional problems. Although at this time the CA-2 has a wide range of scores in all categories, we feel a definite identifiable trend is established based on the drop-out rate at an above the 26 negative point cut off for personal problems. This definite trend and predictor invites more investigation. As a closing remark, the 156 student sample indicated a 23 percent drop-out rate which is concurrent with previous figures identified both by students and enrollment records.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#2 Dropouts In-school #19
#6 Dropouts In-school #16
#5 Dropouts In-school #17
#3 Dropouts In-school #18
#0 Dropouts In-school #7
#4 Dropouts In-school #17
#10 Dropouts In-school #15

## SURVEY REPORT

The CA-1 form was developed at the beginning of the program to assess the awareness of the professional counseling services at each vocational technical school. The survey forms were administered periodically to all students to assess their awareness of the service and various other comments were elicited. The CA-1 form was administered in October of 1976. This survey indicated that approximately 93.8 percent of the students in all three schools were aware of the counseling services. Approximately 6.2 percent of the students were not aware of the professional counseling services. The second item indicates that 80 percent of the students of all three schools surveyed understood what the counseling services provided. Approximately 20 percent of the students did not understand what the counseling services provided. It also indicated that approximately 84.4 percent of the students surveyed felt that the vocational school needed these services. Some 14.2 percent of the students surveyed felt that the professional counseling services were not needed. Question 4 revealed that 51.5 percent of the students of all three schools surveyed felt that educational problems are a major cause for dropouts. Approximately 46.6 percent of the students surveyed at all three schools felt that educational problems were not the cause of dropouts. Of particular interest were the statistics of October, 1976 which stated that 82.7 percent of the students felt that personal problems were a major cause for vocational technical school dropouts, while 16.1 percent of the students felt that they were not. This survey indicated that 23.0 percent of the students were having difficulties at school, while 76.6 percent of the students indicated that they were not having difficulties at the schools.

Also, 68.9 percent of the students indicated that they would use the services of the October, 1976, survey and 28.9 percent of the students indicated that they would not.

On May, 1977, survey and administration of the CA-1, 88 percent of the students indicated that they were aware of the counseling services, while 12 percent of the students indicated that they were not aware of the services. The May, 1977 administration of the CA-1 indicated that 75 percent of the students understood what the services provided while 25 percent of the students did not. This administration of the CA-1 revealed that 80 percent of the students felt that the schools needed the service, while 19 percent of the students did not feel the school needed the services. It also showed that 49 percent of the students felt that educational problems were a major cause of dropout problems, while 50 percent of the students did not feel that educational problems were a major cause of dropouts. Item 5 revealed that 82 percent of the students felt that personal problems were a major cause of dropouts at vocational technical schools, while 17 percent of the students felt that they were not. Some 24 percent of the student indicated that they were having difficulties in school, while 76 percent of the students reported that they were not.

An awareness survey was also conducted in November of 1977. On this survey, it revealed that 80 percent of the students of all three schools were aware of the counseling services, while 20 percent were not. The survey revealed that 71 percent of the students understood what the services provided, while 29 percent of the students did not. It showed that 87 percent of the students felt that their respective schools needed these services, while 13 percent of the students did not. Of interest on this survey was that 50 percent of the students felt that education problems were a major

cause of vocational technical school dropouts, while 50 percent of the students did not feel that educational problems were a major cause of vocational technical school dropouts. It was interesting to note that 80 percent of the students felt that personal problems were a major cause of vocational technical school dropouts, while 20 percent did not. Some 22 percent of the students surveyed indicated they were having difficulties in school, while 78 percent of the students did not, and 75 percent of the students indicated that they would use the services versus 25 percent of the students who did not.

The final awareness survey was conducted in March of 1978. This survey revealed that 87 percent of the students served were aware of the services in all three schools, while 13 percent of the students were not. It demonstrated that 74 percent of the students understood what the counseling services provided, while 23 percent of the students did not. In the final survey, 82 percent of the students in all three schools felt that the service was needed by their respective vocational schools, while 11 percent did not feel that it was needed. Consistent with past surveys, 55 percent of the students felt that educational problems were a major problem of vocational technical school dropouts, while 40 percent of the students did not with 5 percent abstaining. Approximately 79 percent of the students felt that personal problems were the major cause of vocational technical school dropouts, while 15 percent of the students did not feel that personal problems were predominately important and 6 percent abstained. Some 17 percent of the students indicated that they were having difficulty in school and 71 percent of the students indicated that they would use the service.

Of the year-to-date attendance total, 22 percent of the students dropped out of school. It is significant to note that 17 percent of the students at the last survey indicated that they were having trouble in school. This is compared to 22 percent of the students dropping out of school. Therefore, this may contribute significantly to the fact that there is a number of students whose problems may develop rapidly and insidiously and may not be primarily identifiable prior to the onset of a problem. It is speculative of the effect of supportive counseling service being readily available and contributing significantly to solving these problems through their staying in school.

Throughout the project, approximately 75 percent of the students would use the service, as indicated by the four surveys. The last survey indicated that 71 percent would use the professional counseling service. Therefore, the counseling associates conclude that by utilizing a very minimal educational process, the professional counseling service was able to elicit the support of 75 percent of the students.

The student survey indicated that through the utilization of a minimal educational process primarily, announcing the services to the students and letting them know that the services were available as well as the confidentiality of the services. The students as a whole were not only aware of the services that were provided through the professional counseling services, they overwhelmingly seemed to understand what the services provided and also were willing to utilize the services if they felt a need for them. A most interesting observation in this category was that even though there was an indicated 22 percent dropout rate overall in the three schools utilizing the services at the end of the second year project, 17 percent of the students indicated they were having problems

in the school. We feel that this is a significant factor in considering that approximately 16 percent of the students were utilizing the services. When these factors are pulled together and looked at, it indicates that there are a number of students who, although they are having difficulty in school and who will eventually drop out of school, are not aware of the fact that these problems are so significant that they will drop out. This indicates a need for a continued availability of professional services to be accessible to the student to deal with the problems that overwhelmingly contribute to a student's sudden decision to drop out of school.

One interesting observation to this examiner was that in October, 1976, when the initial awareness survey was completed in the three schools, 94 percent of the students were aware of the counseling services and 80 percent understood the services and 84 percent felt the services were needed by the schools. At that time, personal problems continued to be a major concern as possible causes of dropouts as indicated by 83 percent of the students, whereas 51 percent of them felt that educational problems were a cause of dropouts. Also interesting to note at that time, October of 1976, 23 percent of the students were having difficulty in school and 79 percent of them indicated that they would utilize professional services. In comparison, these figures changed somewhat in the end survey, which was conducted in March, 1978, and indicated that 87 percent of the students were aware of the services, where 74 percent of the students understood the services and 82 percent felt the schools needed the services. Again, educational problems were considered major causes of dropouts by a slight majority of 55 percent. Again, personal problems were considered major causes of dropouts, as indicated by 79 percent of the students. At this time 17 percent of the students indicated they were having difficulties

in school and 71 percent of them indicated they would utilize the services if they needed them. In comparing the beginning survey with the ending survey, there were no real significant changes in terms of percentages and statistics of the awareness of the students of the services, their understanding the services and their willingness to use the services. Nor was there a tremendous change in the number of students who experienced difficulties in school. However, the 23 percent drop to 17 percent may have some significance; but, as previously stated in this survey, it is interesting to note that even though dropouts continue, the students seemed to be experiencing difficulty in identifying themselves as having problems in school. Overall, this examiner would conclude from reviewing these surveys that student awareness of professional counseling services is not difficult to establish since our primary method as indicated was to announce the services in each classroom and secondly, to make information available on bulletin boards and attachments to the handbooks. These announcements were carried out during each quarter of the second year but it appears as if the additional education, in terms of announcing in each quarter versus announcing only twice a year, had little or no significant impact on raising the awareness of the students. In fact, the awareness at the end of the project appears to be somewhat less than it was in the October, 1976, survey. Secondly, another key issue identified in this particular survey was indicated by the students over a two-year period of time, approximately 80 percent, identified personal problems as being a major cause of dropouts. At the same time, a majority of the students considered educational problems as a major cause of dropouts. It has always been thought that educational problems were a significant contributing factor to student problems in vocational education. However,

this examiner feels that the overwhelming identification by the students in their concern of personal problems being a major cause of dropouts, has significant meaning to addressing the needs for the vocational education career student. Again, in terms of the significance of this survey, a number of students are able to identify themselves as having difficulty in school and are willing to make this information known. This would indicate that as long as we are able to not only offer some services, but offer some additional supportive methods in terms of helping these students bring out their problems, we may be more likely to deal with them effectively. Again, in the two years this survey was conducted on four different occasions, an overwhelming majority of the students indicated that they would utilize the services if they felt they needed them. This is an indication to this examiner that the stigma attached to "professional counseling services", that is generally carried over to the community, was not found in evidence in the vo-tech schools. This is considered a sophisticated compliment to both the instructors and students in the three schools who were able to accept the services and felt no real bias against using the services if they felt they needed them. In conclusion, the summary of this project survey indicates: (1) counseling services can be made available to the students, (2) the students can be educated to not only be aware but understand what the services provide with a minimal amount of input, (3) the students feel overwhelmingly that the services are needed and are willing to use the services if they need them, and (4) the students are also able to identify major dropout contributors as being not only educational problems, but by an overwhelming majority, personal problems. It is the opinion of this examiner that over the two years of this project where the surveys were conducted, we have

been able to provide direct service to the students, make them aware of the service and they have accepted the service and feel that, if they need the services, they would utilize the professional counseling staff's assistance. We feel this is a significant contribution in the area of counseling in vocational education.

Staff Effectiveness Survey - The staff of Clinical Associates felt it was necessary to find out the attitude of the instructional staff of the three vo-tech schools in terms of some input they would have on the professional counseling services. Some of the information we wanted to know was whether they had students who received the services, how did they observe the student responding, whether this would improve their level of functioning or perhaps decrease their level of functioning, whether they had attempted to refer students who refused and whether the staff felt that services were beneficial to the staff and students. In conjunction with this questionnaire, the review must keep in mind that the number of problems dealt with by the professional counseling services in terms of educational problems was only about 20 percent to 25 percent of the total number of students who were served. It is interesting to note that perhaps there will be some indicator as to correlation between the awareness of the instructors as to whether or not the student received the services and the student's willingness to let the instructors know that they were using the service. It would be very difficult for a student not to let his instructor know he was being counseled as they were excused from class to come for the services. However, the response of the student in terms of responding favorably or unfavorably would be a primarily observable characteristic whereas we feel if the student's problem was of

an emotional content or outside of the school itself, there may or may not have been any observable change in terms of the student functioning within the classroom at the time the referral was made.

Report and Evaluation of the Staff Effectiveness Survey - A total of the three schools will be discussed here. It would be noticeable to indicate that, in compiling the statistics for the staff, we did include the no responses in a separate category, along with the yes or no answers. No response in previous computations have been counted as blanks. We felt it was necessary and crucial to include the no responses of the staff survey primarily because (1) a limited number of people were involved in this particular survey, and (2) this may identify a part of the staff population who continue to take an objective "wait and see" attitude and who continue to have some decision making in terms of firming up their response to the program. In the opinion of this surveyor, this does indicate a part of the staff population who significantly could make more contributions in the future in terms of not only educating them, but in gaining their response and input to the program.

I will go through these questions and observable comments and we will leave the statistics to be looked at by the reviewer in the attachments. The response to the question, "Do students from your class receive the service?" Approximately 67 percent of the instructors indicated that they did, while 31 percent indicated they did not. This question was answered by all but one of the 37 respondents. Question #2: "Did your students respond favorably?" Forty-five percent of the instructors stated that they did respond favorably and 26 percent indicated they did not, while 26 percent of the instructors gave no response. As previously addressed, this may indicate, in the opinion of this examiner, that some of the

students who were having difficulties may or may not have been of such a nature that they wished to discuss them outside of the counseling sessions. Question #3: "Did the students improve their level of functioning?" Twenty-three percent of the instructors indicated that they did, while 43 percent indicated that they did not, and 33 percent had no response. It is interesting to note that the 23 percent who did improve their level of functioning is a close correlation figure with the approximately 20 to 25 percent of the student body that we worked with who primarily had educational problems; whereas, 75 to 80 percent of the student body we worked with were primarily personal, emotional, marital and adjustment problem situations. Therefore, this improved level of functioning would correlate with the number of students who were having primarily educational problems. This examiner does not intend to draw the conclusion that it represents the same students because there were individual instances where instructors talked with us about the improved functioning of students who had specific serious personal and emotional problems. Question #4: "Did the student decrease his level of functioning?" Only 2.5 percent of the instructors indicated that they had decreased their level of functioning, for a 62 percent response to the no answer and 38 percent, 13 instructors, had no response to this question. It is at least interesting to note that none of the students who were observed and understood by the instructors to be receiving services regressed in any measurable way. Question #5: "Did they have students who should have received the services, but refused?" Eighteen percent of the instructors stated yes, 51 percent stated no and 31 percent had no response. Again an interesting correlation is that the 18 percent of the

instructors who had students who should have received services but refused is very close to the 17 percent of the students who identified themselves as having difficulties in school. Question #6: "Do you feel the service is beneficial to the staff and students?" Twenty-eight of the instructors, 76 percent, indicated it was beneficial to the staff and students, while 5 of the staff, 14 percent, indicated it was not and 4 had no responses. This is a very interesting figure in terms of the staff endorsement for the services. When the initial survey was completed on the staff effectiveness questionnaire in October, 1976, 65 percent of the staff indicated they had students who were receiving services, 48 percent indicated they had responded favorably, 22 percent indicated that they had improved their level of functioning, 3 percent indicated they had decreased their level of functioning. At the same time, 32 percent of the instructors stated that students who they requested to receive the service refused, and in October, 1976, when the original survey was completed, 58 percent of the instructors felt the services were beneficial to the staff and students. When this survey was conducted again in May, 1977, 55 percent of the instructors indicated that students had received services, 66 percent of them indicated students responded favorably, 27 percent indicated an increase in level of functioning of the students and the same 3 percent indicated a decrease in level of functioning of the students, and 39 percent indicated they had students who should receive services but refused and at that time, 71 percent of the staff felt the service was beneficial to the staff and students. I think several interesting observations can be drawn from this information. One significant finding, is the professional counseling services have become more familiar and available to the staff

in the vocational technical schools, their response to the services in terms of a positive acceptance has increased dramatically from 58 percent in the original survey in October, an increase to 71 percent in May, 1977, to a 76 percent of the staff feeling the service was beneficial as of March, 1978. Again, another significant conclusion is the fact that in the first two surveys, 32 percent and 39 percent of the students who should have received the services refused to go according to the instructors; whereas, in March, 1978, only 18 percent of the students who would have received the services refused. This is not only, in the opinion of this examiner, significant in the sense that fewer students refused when asked to receive the services, but the staff was much more able to convince students that the services would benefit the students. The number of students from the various instructor's classes who received the services remained fairly stable, varying from 65 percent to a low of 55 percent to a final total of 70 percent. The students being observed to respond favorably varied only slightly from 48 percent to a high of 66 percent to an overall 1977-78 level of 54 percent. The number of students who improved their level of functioning maintained pretty well the same, from a low of 22 percent to a high of 27 percent. We feel that this is a significant finding in that it indicates that (1) staff can be made aware of professional counseling services, and (2) that by utilizing a close interrelationship in working with the staff in cooperation with not only training, but one-to-one case consultation, staff in vocational technical schools realize that the services are beneficial, not only to students, but to the staff as well. We feel that this is a significant implication in terms of professional counseling services and the ability to be utilized, not only by the students but also appreciated and recognized as a benefit by the staff as well.

In relationship to the staff effectiveness, it was appropriate in this section to include remarks and observations of this examiner during the first year of the project when, in July, 1977, he went to each vo-tech school in the state of Arkansas, giving them a copy of the first year report as well as a copy of the initial training manual. During these visits to the 20 vo-tech schools, we tried to acquaint them with the concept behind the project and elicited responses in terms of comments and recommendations. This examiner, as well as the Project Director, Burl Lieblong, went to the schools and it was our overall opinion that most of the responses we received were favorable. We primarily discussed the project with the directors, assistant directors and counselors of the various vo-tech schools. We did elicit written responses from the schools. However, the timing on this was probably very difficult since this was done during the month when most of the staff was involved in taking their accrued vacation; therefore, we had limited written responses to our reports. However, as a conclusion of both the Project Director and the examiner, these reports were beneficial and several included recommendations. One recommendation was made that some follow-up be made on students who had completed the services and were no longer in school. We were able to include this recommendation in our final survey, which is the survey regarding the response of the students who actually received the services. In concluding the staff survey remarks, we were well pleased with the overall response of the staff and the overwhelming support we received from the staff. We were also very encouraged by the information we received in visiting the other staffs and directors throughout the state. It was the feeling that transportability of this program would not be difficult at that time.

Student Consumer Survey - This survey was developed primarily to give an opportunity to the students who actually received the services to respond to the questionnaire regarding their feeling about the services, whether or not they were beneficial to them and whether or not they would refer someone else to the services.

I will review the total from the Student Assessment Form CA-5 which was the form sent to students who had received the services of the professional counseling staff. In follow-up to the previous comments and suggestions by some of the staff at the other vo-tech schools, we did mail a number of these report questionnaires to students who had already graduated from school and our response was favorable. Of the approximately 200 students who had received the services as of March, 1978, we received 108 of these questionnaires back from the recipients of the service for approximately a 55 percent return rate, which is extremely good considering that a number of these were mailed and returned by mail. It was noted at the time this information was being compiled, a few of the survey reports were still being returned. However, due to the need for compiling this information, a cut-off date of April 24, 1978, was established and any forms coming in after that time were not included. However, it is unlikely that it would have contributed significantly. Overall, the first question on the survey was whether or not the student requested the service voluntarily. Sixty-two, 57 percent, indicated that they did, while 46 students, 43 percent, indicated that they did not request services voluntarily. The second question was whether or not the student was referred by the school staff. Seventy-one students, 66 percent, indicated that they were referred by school staff; whereas, 37 students, 34 percent indicated that they were not referred by school staff. This

is an interesting observation in the sense that a number of students who were seen for professional counseling services came as a result of not only being talked to by the staff, but also coming voluntarily, so there would be an overlap of these two statistical responses primarily because some of the students would come voluntarily after they had talked it over with their instructor. Number 3 was whether or not the student receiving the service considered dropping out of school. Forty-three students, 40 percent, responded yes, and 65 students, 60 percent, indicated they were not considering dropping out of school. However, as stated earlier in the report, approximately 90 percent of the students that we worked with, in our opinion, were potential problem dropout students. This is based on the 40 percent of the students who, at the end of the survey, indicated that they were considering dropping out of school. Also a number of students who received the services were either suffering from problems which without help and without resolution of the problems, in the opinion of the instructional and/or professional counseling staff, they would not be able to successfully complete school. It is interesting to note that there is some discrepancy here in terms of the number of students who actually considered dropping out versus the number of students who were actually recognized as having difficulty in completing school. Number 4 was, "Did the professional counseling services help you?" Ninety-four students, 84 percent, of those responding indicated it did, while 14 students, 13 percent, indicated it did not help them. In the opinion of the examiner, this is a very significant finding in the fact that over three fourths of the students who received the services felt that they had benefited from the services. Based on my 14 years of experience in mental health, this is a very high success rate. Number 5 addressed itself to

whether or not the student would use the services again. Ninety-eight students, 91 percent, of those responding indicated that they would and 9 percent, 10 students, indicated that they would not. Again the figures closely relate to the previous question. It is a very close correlation and a conclusion by this examiner that the students who feel counseling services are helpful to them also feel that they would use the services again. This is a significant reinforcement for the effectiveness of the counseling services in that the recipients not only felt the services helped, but the same percentage felt that they would use the services again, should they need them. We feel that this is a very significant finding and contributes to the enhancement and quality of the professional services. Number 6 was the question, "Would you refer someone else?" Sixty-nine students, 64 percent, indicated they would; whereas, 39 students, 36 percent, indicated they would not. It is indicative to note that when the students were asked in question #1, "Did they request the services voluntarily?", 62 students said they did and 60 students indicated they would refer someone else. The students who received services voluntarily more than likely would refer someone else. Students who were referred primarily by school staff would not refer someone else. In looking over this final survey and comparing it with the October, 1976, survey, 80 percent of the students at that time requested services voluntarily, 39 percent considered dropping out, 94 percent said the services helped them, 98 percent said they would use the services again, and 77 percent said they would refer someone else. In looking at the May, 1977, statistics, 78 percent of the students requested the services voluntarily, 67 percent indicated at that time they were considering

dropping out of school, while 100 percent indicated they would use the services again and 89 percent indicated they would refer someone else. It is an observation, in conclusion, that in comparing the surveys over the two-year project, looking at the total responses from the students who received the professional counseling services throughout the project, an overwhelming majority of the students felt that the services were beneficial to them, an overwhelming majority of the students felt they would use the services again, and a majority of the students would refer someone else. Again, it is significant to note that an overwhelming number of students throughout the two-year project requested the services voluntarily. Those considering dropping out varied from a low of 39 percent to a high of 67 percent, with the overall figure in March, 1978, being 40 percent. One of the contributing factors to the high number of students who were considering dropping out of school in May, 1977, is possibly attributed to the time of the year when a large number of students are looking for jobs and considering dropping out of school, and, in some instances, have a bad attack of "spring fever." It is the conclusion of the staff of Clinical Associates, that, in the quality of work, as far as determined by the students who received the services themselves, the services were not only beneficial but were services that would be used again and were overwhelmingly requested on a voluntary basis and a large percentage of the students identified themselves as considering dropping out. We feel that these are significant findings and will contribute again to the utilization of professional counseling services in an effective method of dealing with a potential problem area students may encounter in vocational education.

In summarizing the survey forms that have been completed throughout the project, I have attempted to try to review them and compare them and draw several conclusions. We have included copies of the survey forms in the overall document in the table of contents for the observation and conclusions of the reviewers of this project. However, in terms of providing the information as stated in the initial introductory remarks to this section, it was our intention to provide survey information in three primary areas. The first area was being able to establish a procedure whereby we could gather information to indicate the awareness of the professional counseling services; second, was the acceptance of the professional counseling services; and third, was the quality of the professional counseling services. It is the conclusion of this examiner that the survey information which is available in this project overwhelmingly supports the three areas of criteria which we established as a necessary part of this research document.

## DISSEMINATION

As outlined in the original contract, Clinical Associates was required to present the findings of the two-year research to all available instructors in the vocational schools of Arkansas. This requirement was completed during the months of June and July. A total of 143 instructors attended the presentations. At the end of each presentation, each instructor was asked to fill out a survey form to elicit their responses to the presentation and to the research study. The results of these surveys are presented on the following page.

A survey of the results show that over 90 percent of those instructors who attended the presentation felt the presentation was informative. Also, over 90 percent of the instructors who attended the presentation felt their respective vocational technical school would benefit from a program similar to the presentation and research study outlined by Clinical Associates.

CA-1

SURVEY FORM

This form is to obtain information regarding the professional counseling services available to the student of _____ _____. Please answer the following questions and return.

1. Are you aware of the counseling services? ☐ yes ☐ no

2. Do you understand what these services provide? ☐ yes ☐ no

3. Do you feel the school needs these services? ☐ yes ☐ no

4. Do you feel educational problems are a major cause for drop outs? ☐ yes ☐ no

5. Do you feel personal problems are a major cause of drop outs? ☐ yes ☐ no

6. Are you having any difficulties in school? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Would you use the services? ☐ yes ☐ no

PRE-ENROLLMENT ASSESSMENT FORM

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

CLASS REQUESTED: _____

As part of the enrollment process we ask you to complete this form. Carefully read the instructions and complete Sections One and Two. Then read the paragraph in Section Three and answer the questions.

This will in No way affect your chances for admission or placement as a student. It is to your benefit to consider this form seriously.

SECTION ONE

You will find below a list of 11 personal problems followed by a series of numbers from 0 - 5. For each problem you are to circle the number which applies to you or which might apply to during the coming school year. For instance, if you have no financial difficulties that might cause you difficulty, circle zero. Another example: If your parents or spouse do not like the idea of you coming to school and may put pressure on you to quit, circle the number which best describes how serious the problem may be. Be sure and circle one choice for each problem. Do not leave any blank. If you are not sure how to fill out the form, please ask for help.

| | No Problem | An Occasional Problem | A Mild Problem | A Moderate Problem | Fairly Serious Problem | Very Serious Problem |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marital Problems or problems with a boy-friend or girlfriend | 0 0 | 1 1 | 2 2 | 3 3 | 4 4 | 5 5 |
| Financial Problems | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Parents or marriage partner disapproves of your going to school | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Personal-emotional problems such as: depression or nerves | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| History of alcohol or drug abuse | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Transportation Problems | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Living Conditions | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Problems between students and teachers or staff | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Medical or health problems | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Family problems such as deaths, frequent arguments | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other-Please specify | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

_____

SECTION TWO

You will find below a list of 15 educational/learning problems followed by a series of numbers from 0 - 5. Just like in SECTION ONE you are to circle the number which might apply to you now or in the coming school year. Be sure and circle one choice for each problem. Do not leave nay blank. If you are not sure how to fill out the form, please ask for help.

| | No Problem | An Occasional Problem | A Mild Problem | A Moderate Problem | Fairly Serious Problem | Very Serious Problem |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poor educational background; high school dropout. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Low reading skills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Difficulty with concentration | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Low math skills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Difficulty understanding verbal instructions | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Bothered by or easily distracted by loud noise or sudden noise | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Cannot tolerate a closed space | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Difficulty with memory | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor study skills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Lack of attention to small details | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Lack of praise or support from family or school staff | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Lack of study time | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor coordination | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Lack of neatness in work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other - please specify | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

_____

SECTION THREE

Please answer the following questions:

Check one or more:

____ I completed high school in year _____.

____ I left school at grade _____.

____ I was absent more than 10 days the last year of school I attended.

Please rate your performance in high school:

____ D's and F's

____ About a C average

____ About a B average

____ A's and B's

Please rate the important of vocational education to your future success:

____ Necessary

____ Partly Necessary

____ Of little use

The school has a professional counseling service available to all students. The service is here to assist you with any personal or educational problem that you have or help you find a better source of assistance. If there are problems which are affecting you now, please consider making an appointment with the counseling service. Together, the counselor and you can consider the best way to deal with the problem. This also applies to things that come up during the school year -- don't hesitate to make an appointment! We are sincerely interested in seeing you make it this year.

For now, the counselor will go over this material with you and answer any questions you may have.

CA-3 INTERVIEW FORMAT Date: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Age: _____

Living with: _____

Records: GATB _____ CA-II Personal _____

H. S. GPA _____ Educational _____

Other _____ Composite _____

Financial Assistance: _____

Military: Branch _____ Duration _____

Discharge/Explanation _____

Prior Health Record: _____

Marital Status: _____ Children _____ Ages _____

Explanation _____

Current Relationship _____

_____

_____

Education:

Department _____

Instructor _____

Date Enrollment _____

Number absences as of current date _____

Previous Education and Performance _____

Current Performance _____

Confidentiality: I hereby authorize the staff of Clinical Associates to release information which may be of importance concerning my school performance to:

request complete confidentiality

_____ Date _____

check.

Signed: _____

Student Witness

Initial Complaint: _____

Impression: _____

Recommendations: _____

Testing: _____

Disposition/Closing Summary: _____

CA-4

## SURVEY FORM

This form is to obtain your evaluation of the effectiveness with the students referred from your class who received the professional counseling services. Please mark your answers and return.

1. Did students from your class receive the services? ☐ yes ☐ no

2. Did the students respond favorably? ☐ yes ☐ no

3. Did the students improve their level of function? ☐ yes ☐ no

4. Did the student decrease in his level of function? ☐ yes ☐ no

5. Did you have students who should have received the service but refused? ☐ yes ☐ no

6. Do you feel the service is beneficial to the staff and students? ☐ yes ☐ no

CA-5

SURVEY FORM

This form is to obtain information regarding your assessment of the professional counseling services. Please answer the questions and return.

1. Did you request the service voluntarily? ☐ yes ☐ no

2. Where your referred by the school staff? ☐ yes ☐ no

3. Did you consider dropping out of school? ☐ yes ☐ no

4. Did the professional counseling services help you? ☐ yes ☐ no

5. Would you use the service again? ☐ yes ☐ no

6. Would you refer someone else? ☐ yes ☐ no